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# arglebargle!

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## Black & White in COLOR #5 : The CREATURE!

Wow, just when you think you've seen everything....

### about me

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Much debate has been made over the years on the subject of our old pal, The Creature From the Black Lagoon and his true pallor pallet. Since color shots of the west coast Production
--outside of a precious few publicity stills-- don't seem to exist, it only added to the legend.

I've even read that these shots were hand-tinted by the studio!

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And -- just to give the east-coast production a little equal time -- Note not only the differences in design and stature between the land and water (florida unit) costumes but also in the overall color scheme as well. The water costume (below) was painted with much more of a flat yellow pallor than the land suit was so it would photograph more clearly in the waters of Wakulla Springs.

The underwater suit for *Revenge of the Creature* (below) was signifigantly darker than the original's.

So just very recently these next pictures surfaced. And -- Holy Cow! They're previously unpublished photos from *LIFE* magazine's massive archives. Unseen by just a select few until now... Who knew he had that much gold on him?

At least one picture from this shoot -- the black-and-white (below) -- DID appear in *LIFE* in 1953. It identified Ben Chapman as the actor portraying him for this shoot.

(Yes... also a source of some debate)

And here's some more!

The above and below shot look to have been shot not only on the same day, but look to have been snapped just about a second apart!

So here's the Creature looking like we know him in B & W... But in color he's got the red lip thang goin' on. Hmmm...

Jack Theakston notes on the material:
Here is the B/W photo from LIFE next to the color photo ... I assume they are from the same session and the suit was the same, The lips don't look so "Tammy Faye Baker" in monochrome.

Huh! Well, seeing is believing -- red and green do photograph with much the same value.

Mystery solved?

Nope.

Other sources state that "the suit was repainted for the few color publicity shots. (there are more than these, and they've been circulating for ages.) it only had the red lips there. same with the gold drybrushing. As to the eyes, there were 3 different sets. the close-up and publicity set had a transparent pupil."

Julie (Julia) Adams herself has stated in interviews (and specifically in the "making of" documentary on the *Creature From The Black Lagoon* dvd) that the lips on the original Creature costumes used during filming were not red:

"Well, the original Creature was this, uh, sort of a softer moss green, a very very subtle color so that it picked up shadows, and...and it had the feeling of a reality of flesh, really, being there, and most of the recreations are too bright. They're...they're much too vivid a green...and sometimes the lips are red, and uh...it's, uh...they're garish compared to the original."

Bob Burns backed this up when I visited his famous Basement in 1998. When I inquired about the true coloring of the costume he showed me a mask made off the original Land costume mold that was painted a "frog green" as he called it. "It's pretty darn close to the original color" he added. It sported no such red lips.

(Wow... what a great shot)

**Tom Weaver adds on the Classic Horror forum:**
*Wellllllll, I think we should still think of the Creature as having red lips, because Universal put red lips on him on the poster and red lips on the costume for the publicity shots and obviously wanted the public to perceive the Creature as having red lips even if, during the actual black-and-white shooting, he didn't. If the Wolf Man was hot-pink during shooting but brown in color publicity shots and brown on the posters, fans can file the "hot-pink" away in their brains as a piece of interesting trivia but all representations of the Wolf Man oughta be brown. IMHO.*

*So does this really clear anything up?*

*Nope.*

*But it sure is **COOL!***

*Big Thanks and a flip of a fin to the Hobby Talk forum, Tom Weaver, The LIFE magazine archives, and everyone else responsible in part or whole for making this post possible!*

Labels: Color Life Photos, Creature From the Black Lagoon, Julia Adams

posted by c. martin croker at 6:30 pm | 4 comments